



did you hear about...

shawn

Life is a hoot. As soon as you think you have a handle on it, it throws you a curve. I love how, if you change one little thing, the whole future can change. If you turn left instead of right, you don't see that restaurant you've heard so much about. Or, you get to the gym later and you meet someone who's usually not there when you normally workout. There's a ton of examples. Life is chock full of pleasant surprises.

Remember last month I went to the Dancing for Life benefit at Dick's Cabaret? Well, with Nu-Towne Saloon being just down the street, I decided to stop in for a little nightcap. I met this guy named Todd Mathus and we got to talking. It turns out Todd is producing an independent film. My knowledge of indie films in Phoenix doesn't go much passed porn, but there is a thriving indie film community right here in the valley. Who knew?

The movie is called "Running On Empty" and it's about a young woman named Sydney whose life is changed forever due to a chance meeting with another young woman named Jane. Of course, what would a film be without a few complications? Pretty boring right? Well, Sydney is married to Cory, a marine who's just returned home from duty and Jane is a single mom on welfare. This is not the ideal situation for two women in love.

Todd invited me to the screening of the trailer last Thursday. So I got all dressed up (a tie and everything) and headed downtown to the Metropolitan Arts Institute. There was a meet and greet at 7 followed by the screening and then a small reception afterward. They had quite a nice turnout. Besides the cast and crew, there were friends and family as well as we members of the press. It was all very exciting. Nitara Lee Osbourne not only wrote the screenplay but was the director and executive producer. She said it was a long time coming to this point. She actually started the project three years ago and the script went through forty revisions before she got it to where she wanted it. This is her fifth of eight screenplays and she's also written for two television shows. Pro-

ducing, writing and directing her own film is quite a feat. We should be hearing more from Nitara before she's through.

Todd, my God, he could fuel a small city with the energy he runs on. He was everywhere, meeting, greeting and making sure everything was going as planned. Kathleen Benner, who plays Sydney, was in attendance and she's gorgeous, as was Jose Rosette who plays Cory. Nathan Price also gets in with a producing credit. They previewed two trailers, one for television and one theatrical version. If you can't guess what the difference is, the theatrical version is the one with the smoking hot lesbian love scene. Todd told me Universal Studios has expressed interest in future financing and distribution so you might see "Running On Empty" at a theatre near you. Let's hope so because it's really a well done film and we all can say we heard about it first.

Now that everyone is busy doing the holiday party thing, we've come up with a few ideas to help you avoid being THAT GUY. Everyone knows who THAT GUY is and none of us want to be him. THAT GUY doesn't know when the party is over. Subtle hints (even not so subtle ones) from the host or bartender are totally lost on him. THAT GUY doesn't realize that social interaction is just that, interaction. THAT GUY feels the event is his one man show. THAT GUY gets way drunk and does things he probably won't remember and would die of embarrassment if he did remember. THAT GUY hits on everyone within shouting distance or runs everyone down because he KNOWS none of the people at the party are good enough for him. There are a thousand and one variations of THAT GUY. Don't be any one of them. Go out, be sane, have fun.

'Till next time...